

# **Minutes**

## **Environmental Justice Planning Workgroup Meeting**

### **July 20, 2006**

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**Members Present:** Terry Stark, Erin Field, Marilyn Dolan, Renee Pinel, Brenda Washington Davis, Laurie Nelson, Jim Wells, Carolina Simunovic, Mily Trevion- Saucedo, Tracey Brieger, Veda Federighi, Carl Winter, Gary Kunkel, Karen Heisler,

**Members Absent:** Teresa DeAnda, Martha Arguella, Jena Ambacher, Claudia Soria

**Facilitators:** Joseph McIntyre, Sara Tickler

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, August 24th 10- 2pm  
**Location:** California Department of Food and Agriculture  
1220 N Street,  
Sacramento, CA  
Room 133

#### **Meeting Agenda**

- Welcome and Introductions
- Project Background
- Three Focus Groups
- What Did You Notice
- Next Meeting

#### **Meeting Ground Rules**

- Listen
- Respect
- Hold Judgment
- Share Fully
- Courtesy:
  - Silent cells/pagers
  - Be concise
  - Be on time
  - Be prepared

#### **Project Background**

A PowerPoint slideshow was presented to ensure that all members begin the project with a baseline understanding of the history of DPR and EJ, the role of the group, and the goal and timeline of the project.

### **Three Focus Groups**

The work group members were instructed by the facilitator to divide themselves into three groups: Industry, EJ Advocates and Regulators. Each group took a turn sitting in a small “focus group” circle while the other members stood or sat quietly within hearing range. Each focus group was asked to consider and discuss the following questions:

- How would you describe yourselves?
- How do you think others on different side describe you?
- How do you characterize them?
- What are the best opportunities in this process for establishing common ground?

#### **Focus Group 1: Identify as Industry**

How would you describe yourselves?

- Work for a cause, stewards
- Passionate about this important work
- Represent farmers
- Advocacy (importance to what they provide), communication facilitators- to outside California, objective representatives- believe in regulations- sound regulations “Objective Representation”.

How do you think others on different side describe you?

- Evil empire, toxic queen
- Depends on who it is- other side of issues, princess of darkness, evil empire, toxic queen. In Legislature- important to try to have at least some rapport.
- Very corporate, don't care about environment.
- The people who spin so that the corporation can keep on.
- Exploitation of labor, factory farm- wasters of water, polluters-air, water and land.
- “Hired gun to take advantage of the revolving door.”
- People confuse them with people who make the applications.

How do you characterize them?

- Have sympathy, compassion- but wish they understood more.
- Impassioned, idealistic, passion over full education, not fully informed. Hard to have a conversation with that.
- Terrorists
- Overly eager, emotional, what is the end point? Lack of science- emotion over science. Tone is very accusatory.
- Purpose is to maintain healthy environment.
- Very committed. Ends justify the means attitude, not good compromisers.
- Environmental activists.

What are the best opportunities in this process for establishing common ground?

- Developing process where members of the public not based in Sacramento nor maybe do not have a scientific background can be communicated.
- Agree on some vocabulary, agree on what problem is- where the line is.

- Humanize the other side. Be able to have a conversation. Be in the same room.
- Develop common ground in safe forum- be heard- get out of stereotypes.
- Develop forum to have an exchange of ideas.

## **Focus Group 2: Identify as Environmental Justice Advocates**

How would you describe yourselves?

- Person dedicated to working in community. Pursued a good education. Many opportunities were available. Work with non profit to give back any way I could. People I work with are very giving. Went to progressive university- never described myself as an environmentalist before. I had preconceived notion about hippies. I am committed to the community.
- Health advocate- seeing poisoned people getting sicker; they have no insurance- no where to go with it. It is harder for some people to access where decisions are made. How do I use privilege of language, etc to help- better others?
- I come from a migrant family. Became community, labor organizer because of personal experience- my family worked in the field. Got mad- then realized there are more options- want a more dignified life. All have the right to be treated with dignity. Became a social activist. Had a family. Want to make it different.

How do you think others on different side describe you?

- Rebel, trouble maker, emotional, no science- unknown motivations, hate farmers.
- Someone that doesn't understand the other side. Within the box, racist terms, not seeing the whole picture, class issue
- Young; don't know what's going on. Just a girl, irresponsible, wants to see the end of agricultural industry, doesn't like farmers.

How do you characterize them?

- They are away from what is going on. Not in touch with reality of people working for them. Too far away to know. Divorced from reality. Either too busy or don't care. Workers not a priority.
- Motivated by money, by profit, don't care about people, lack of understanding or dialogue about alternatives, growers/farmers "squeezed" trapped in the cycle. Don't listen. Have no idea about what it would be like to be on the other side.
- Well connected, has all the power and influence, make all the decisions, THE Corporation, represents financial, distant.

What are the best opportunities in this process for establishing common ground?

- Buffers between growing cities, think differently, find common interests
- Agreeing that there is a problem to start, focus on solutions not problem.
- Agree with all that- compromise without compromising your principles, understanding, get to agreement to have a good relationship without having to worry about negotiating, understand where everyone else is coming from.
- Become a learning community.

### Focus Group 3: Identify as Regulators

How would you describe yourselves?

- Square in the middle- if doing right- I get it from both sides.
- On both sides
- Many sides to this- try to do difficult job, try to answer to needs of MANY different needs, legislature, within limits of mandate, want to do right thing, want to move beyond mandates
- Not same accountability, but try to communicate, feel a lot of responsibility- represent institution- more credibility- often asked to translate, do I agree or not? Many shades of grey. Many groups. In position of trust.

How do you think others on different side describe you?

- Regulated community- think we over regulate, burdened by regulation – narrow focused. Others think we don't regulate enough. Push, pull- legislature interprets many different ways.
- Depends on which group or administration is looking at us. Viewed by co-regulators- uninformed, not aware of happenings on ground, not doing enough, not fulfilling mandate
- Regulated person will say overregulated, gets used
- Mixed bag, ivory tower, strong ties to ag business, lots of gifts come in, good programs in ag, outreach- lot of people don't recognize that, think we are arrogant, representing a university- marching to own drum- don't care about others.

How do you characterize them?

- Co-regulators- too narrow of a focus sometimes, don't always acknowledge wider context. Don't want to be regulated, others want to work with them, can be economically good, Public- sometimes not recognizing what the limits of our authorities, not always able to do what they would like to do. Misunderstand scope of limits. Over-reliance of hiding behind "science"- equate science with perfect science. Placed in mode of having to make public policy judgment based on the best available science.
- Don't recognize limits of resources as well. Don't understand our priority setting. Lack of recognition that government moves at certain speed- slow- accountable for public monies. Hard to set programs in place.
- Growers regulated heavily- want minimal impact on ability to do business. Others want more- get all of it. Everyone wants something from us.
- Dislike the polarization of those arguments. Science is not absolute- other times- just don't have enough data to make real judgments- science is being abused. Hard to be objective.

What are the best opportunities in this process for establishing common ground?

- Lots of room in the middle for negotiating. Focus on middle- not polar extremes.
- There is common ground. California is a leader- opt. to be more protective of environment and public health and make a business out of it.
- Get a sense of where priorities should be. Don't spend too much in solutions- get too bogged down. Awareness of limitations of resources, mandates.
- Continuous facilitation effort- allows diverse groups to have dialogues. New thoughts, approaches- would not otherwise be hatched if always in own camps.

After all three focus groups, the entire work group responded to the following questions:

- What did you notice?

- Everyone said “they just don’t know what it is like.”
- “We are all people” and have that in common.
- I have hope, looking for common ground
- It reminded (from long ago) me that growers are willing to work together
- We all shared something different than the usual conversation.
- Industry conversation was less “self focused” and more “industry focused”
- We all have families, kids, live in communities
- EJ reps are not self-described “environmentalists”
- We are missing the farmer “perspective” as in traditional farmer and “workers”
- Industry representatives are advocating for “people” also
- Was there anything that concerned you?
  - Other issues in the state may supersede our issues:
    - Urbanization
    - Pollution
    - Highway infrastructure
  - There is a limit of what government can do.
    - It may not be able to do what we want to do.
    - If so, we need to take those ideas could elsewhere
  - Fear that we could be opening door to future regulation/legislation
  - We need to focus on EJ issues, not debate chemicals/pesticides- specifically.

### ***Meeting Evaluation***

The following positive comments were generated regarding the meeting:

- The time of the meeting is good
- Great facilitation
- Doing some sort of exercise to help get to know each other

Ideas for better meetings:

- Less vegetarian sandwiches- more meat
- More water next time
- Coffee
- PowerPoint and other documents should be sent out in advance
- We need all of the members here.
- Start on time